

SAFETY ALERT



AFZF-GA-SAFE

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS III CORPS AND FORT HOOD
FORT HOOD, TEXAS 76544-5056



31 May 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Aircraft Accident Prevention -- Safety Alert 02-07

1. III Corps lost another aircraft in a fiery accident several nights ago – an AH-64A. The aircraft was completely destroyed, making it the second Class A aircraft accident this fiscal year. This occurred less than a month after our last Class A aircraft loss. While the details and cause of the incident have not been determined yet, I want to share with our aviation commanders and leaders the information that is available for lessons learned.
2. The crew was executing a briefed training mission while deployed to an off-post training area. The Pilot in Command (PC) was an Instructor Pilot (IP) with approximately 2700 hours. He was at the controls in the front seat. The Pilot (PI) was the Platoon Leader in the back seat with over 500 hours. Both were RL1 pilots. The aircraft was part of a flight of six, conducting Holding Area Operations. As the flight started to take off at approximately 50-60 Knots, the PC reported “something wrong with the pedals” and began to set the aircraft down. Chalk 3 of the flight reported seeing smoke coming from the Catwalk area of the accident aircraft. Simultaneously, the crew of the accident aircraft received an APU Fire Light. The PI pulled the Auxiliary Power Unit (APU) Fire Pull Handle and activated the Fire Bottle Switch while the PC landed the aircraft. The crew performed an emergency shutdown and then egressed from the aircraft. While the crew ran from the aircraft, the fuel cells exploded and the aircraft proceeded to burn. The Aircraft was destroyed by fire. The aircrew sustained no injuries. At this time, it is assumed that the Aircrew’s immediate professional actions to the circumstances that occurred may have saved their lives.
3. A team from the Army Safety Center is on site, investigating the accident. In the absence of their final findings and recommendations, I want commanders to ensure that all aviators are briefed on the known information concerning this accident. An accident investigation will attempt to determine the causes of the incident. Additionally, I encourage commanders of AH-64 to inspect areas surrounding the Shaft Driven Compressor (SDC) and the APU clutch for defects. Leaders must continue emphasizing the requirements outlined in the emergency procedure steps found in Chapter 9 of all of Army’s Aircraft –10 manuals. Commanders have to ensure that every aircrew is fully trained and ready to perform when unexpected emergencies arise.

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